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JUBILEE OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

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THE Jubilee Convention, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Young Men's Christian Association in America, which is to be held in Boston this month, calls attention to the development of the work of this great organization. Over 3,000 delegates from the United States and other lands will meet from June 11th to 16th to consider the work of the past fifty years, and plan for the extension of Christ's Kingdom among young men throughout the world.

The founder of the Young Men's Christian Association, George Williams, now Sir George Williams, who was born at Ashbury Farmhouse, near Dulverton, Southern England, in 1821, grew into manhood at the time when the industrial revolution in England was attracting young men from the country to the town. He went to London in October, 1841, and became a clerk in the dry goods establishment facing St. Paul's churchyard, of which he is now the proprietor. At that time, there were some eighty young men employed in the different departments of the business. Through Mr. Williams's efforts, a Young Men's Christian Association was organized, for the purpose of establishing religious services and Bible classes among the young men employed in various houses of business in London. This organization took effect on the sixth of June, 1844. The name was suggested by Christopher Smith, George Williams's room-mate. The constitution provided that the Association should seek to promote the spiritual and mental improvement of young men engaged in the drapery trade, that its membership should be young men who gave decided evidence of conversion to God, and

that its management should be in the hands of a small board chosen from the membership.

This movement rapidly assumed important proportions. Prayer meetings and Bible classes were soon established in fourteen different business houses, and a missionary to young men was employed in January, 1845. In 1848, apartments were rented, in which a library, reading-room, restaurant, social parlors, and educational classes were provided; and young men who made no religious profession were invited, upon the payment of a small fee, to use the privileges of the institution, though they were given no share in its management and were known not as members but associates. A lecture course was established, which soon became the most important lecture platform in London. Branches of the parent society sprang up in different parts of the metropolis, and provincial branches in different parts of the United Kingdom became affiliated with the parent society.

The Association was marked by intense religious zeal. Through personal interviews by its members with young men, through Bible classes and evangelistic meetings for men, a persistent campaign was carried on to win young men to lead a religious life. The secular agencies developed considerably during the first seven years. In 1851, in the Central Association, there were 225 members and 425 associates. There were estimated to be 750 members and associates in the other branches in the metropolis. At this time, there were eight Societies in London, and sixteen in various parts of the United Kingdom. The twenty-four Associations enrolled approximately 2,700 young men.

Knowledge of this work came to America in the fall of 1851 at three different centers—Montreal, Boston and New York. The first movement took place at Montreal, where, through the efforts of two young men, who had become acquainted with the London work through published copies of the lectures delivered before the London Association, an Association was formed on November 25th, 1851. In November, 1851, Mr. George Petrie, who had become well acquainted with the London work during a visit to that city, called together a group of his personal friends in New York. These conferences, however, did not result in organization until encouraged by the success at Boston, where the first Association in the United States was established.

A letter published on October 30th, 1851, describing in detail the work of the London Association, came under the eye of Captain Thomas V. Sullivan, who was active in Christian work among seamen, and so impressed him that he determined to establish a Society in Boston. His purpose was accomplished at a meeting held on December 29th, 1851, in the chapel of the old South Meeting House in Spring Lane. The Boston Society laid great emphasis upon the Association as a social resort. It introduced the committee system, and inaugurated the plan of restricting voting and office-holding to members who were in good standing in an evangelical church. It was the Boston Society which gave character and direction to the American movement. It immediately became one of the leading religious agencies of the city. Twelve hundred young men joined its membership; 16,000 copies of its constitution and by-laws were printed, and scattered broadcast over the United States; representatives of the Society assisted in founding Associations at other points, and through its influence, by the year 1854, some twenty-six Associations had been established in different parts of the Union.

Through the efforts of Chauncey M. Langdon, a government employee in Washington, and later a clergyman in the Episcopal Church, a convention of the American Associations was called at Buffalo in June, 1854. This convention established an alliance of the Associations of the United States and Canada, under the supervision of an executive committee which was instructed to call annual conventions, and to do everything in their power to foster and extend the work of the Associations. This alliance was known as the American Confederation, and it was largely through its influence that the American movement rapidly took pre-eminence among the Associations of the world.

In the meantime, through the efforts of George Williams and others, Associations had been established at Paris and other points in France, and at Geneva, in Switzerland.

Prior to the founding of the Association, a movement known as the "*Jünglingsverein*" had been started among young workmen in Germany in the year 1834. This had already come into friendly correspondence with the Associations in England.

The culminating event of the early period was the first convention of the Associations of all lands, held at Paris in 1855, at which the memorable statement of belief known as "the Paris

basis" was adopted. This has been called the apostles' creed of the Association, and did much to unify the movement. It was proposed by Mr. Frederick Monnier, a layman from Strasburg, and was read before the convention, all the delegates standing, "in which position it was then solemnly passed by the unanimous vote of the whole assembly. The members present then knelt together, gratefully to acknowledge the mercy of God and to entreat His benediction on the decision at which they had arrived." The basis was as follows:

"The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men, who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be His disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among young men."

The reports of this convention showed the estimated strength of the Association movement as follows:

Continent of Europe:			
Germany	130	Associations.	6,000 Members.
Switzerland	54	"	700 "
France	49	"	700 "
Holland	10	"	400 "
Belgium and Italy.....	3	"	60 "
	246	"	7,860 "
British Isles	47	"	8,500 "
United States and Canada.....	36	"	14,000 "
Total	329	"	30,360 "

The period from 1844 to 1855 saw the Association founded in the various Protestant countries, an International Alliance established on the American continent, and a uniform basis adopted by the Associations of all lands.

During the years from the Paris convention in 1855 to the Geneva convention in 1878, when a central executive committee for the Associations of the world was established, with headquarters at Geneva, the Young Men's Christian Associations were gradually developing a world consciousness as an organization, and slowly evolving a method of work for ministering to the needs of young men. During this period, the American Associations rose to the place of pre-eminence, and the type of Association developed here has in later years spread throughout the world.

For convenience the American development during this period may be further subdivided into four divisions: The period of the Confederation, 1855 to 1861; the War period, 1861 to 1866;

the revival of the Association work after the War, 1866 to 1870; the period of adaptation of the work to the needs of young men, 1870 to 1878.

The six years preceding the Civil War were remarkable for two results in the Association: the creation of the International Committee, with its work of supervision, and the great revival which stirred the entire country during the years 1857 and 1858. During these years, the central committee of the Confederation was located respectively at Washington, Cincinnati, Buffalo and Philadelphia. This migratory plan was soon found to be a source of weakness, but much good was accomplished. Annual conventions were held, and information regarding the new movement was widely disseminated. Many new Associations were founded; and at the outbreak of the war there were 240 Associations in America, with an estimated enrollment of 30,000 members.

In 1856, several members of the New York Association established a union prayer-meeting, chiefly for men of the Dutch Reformed Church, in Fulton street. This was carried on for nearly a year, and in the following September it was given over to Mr. J. C. Lamphier, the city missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, with the understanding that it should be continued on a union basis. The committee of the Association arranged to co-operate heartily in this meeting.

In the fall of 1857, came the financial panic which prostrated the business interests of the country. Large numbers of men began immediately to attend this noon prayer-meeting, and, under the auspices of the New York Association, many more union meetings were established in different parts of the city. Similar meetings were conducted by all the Young Men's Christian Associations throughout the country. It is estimated that over 300,000 persons were added to the evangelical churches of America as a result of this revival.

The years from 1861 to 1866 in America were overshadowed by the cloud of the Civil War. The financial depression and the distractions attending the outbreak of the War brought the Association to the lowest point it ever reached. The Boston membership declined from 2,400 to 700. The New York City Association, at the beginning of 1862, had but 151 members; it was burdened with a debt of \$2,400, and its work had sadly declined. It is recorded that only sixty organizations survived the War;

and yet, in the midst of this depression and apparent weakness, the Association performed one of the most heroic tasks ever undertaken by a religious organization.

Through the influence of the Association in New York, heartily seconded by those of Boston, Washington, Philadelphia, Chicago and other places, the United States Christian Commission was organized. This was the first organized attempt, on a large scale, to minister to both the spiritual and physical needs of soldiers under arms. The plan of work was to send out delegates with supplies and needed comforts, who should spend some five or six weeks without remuneration, nursing the sick and wounded, distributing literature, conducting evangelistic and religious meetings, bearing messages from home, and in various ways encouraging and helping the soldiers. Over 5,000 of these delegates were sent out during the War. The following table shows the vast efforts of this Commission in raising money and supplies for the soldiers:

***RECEIPTS BY THE UNITED STATES CHRISTIAN COMMISSION.**

	1862.	1863.	1864.	1865. (4 mos.)	Total.
Cash	\$40,160	\$358,290	\$1,297,755	\$828,357	\$2,524,472
Supplies	191,096	558,637	1,584,592	1,432,298	3,766,623
Totals	\$231,256	\$916,927	\$2,882,347	\$2,260,655	\$6,291,095

This was an heroic service, and won for the Association the admiration and confidence of the public.

In the meantime, the New York City Society had secured for its librarian Robert R. McBurney, and for its president William E. Dodge, Jr. It had on its board of directors the Hon. Cephas Brainerd, who had been identified with its work from the beginning, and who had early conceived the true mission of the Association. These men, with their associates, set about developing in New York a work specifically adapted to the needs of young men, and introduced a new era in Association history.

The years from 1866 to 1870 mark the revival of the American work after the war. In June, 1866, an International Convention was called at Albany, which outlined a new policy for the Associations. The plan of a migratory International Committee was given up, and the headquarters were permanently established in New York city. Cephas Brainerd was, a year later, chosen chairman of this committee, a position which he held for twenty-

five years. This convention announced the platform that the work of the Association should be limited to young men, although it was some years before this became the actual practice.

As yet there was no uniformity among the Associations in America as to the conditions of membership. This question was agitated much at this time. Finally, at the international convention held in Portland, in 1869, it was decided that only members of evangelical churches should vote or hold office in the Young Men's Christian Association, and it was stated that:

"We hold those churches to be evangelical which, maintaining the Holy Scriptures to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (the only begotten son of the Father, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who was made sin for us though knowing no sin, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree) as the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved from everlasting punishment."

Since the adoption of this test, the American Associations have held firmly to the evangelical position, and they have received the confidence and gifts of evangelical believers.

In the meantime, in New York city a determined effort was being made to erect a suitable building adapted to the needs of young men. In addition to the work already undertaken for the spiritual, intellectual, and social improvement of young men, it was decided to add a gymnasium for physical training. After an earnest canvass for funds, and a most careful study of plans, the historic building on the corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue, which provided under one roof for the various phases of Association activity, was erected. This building cost \$487,000, and was opened to the public in November, 1869. Here was developed the modern type of the diversified work for the cultivation of Christian manhood, which has become characteristic of the American Associations, and which is spreading throughout the world.

A unique feature of this building, which has been copied in most Association structures, was the central reception-room, or lobby, in which was the public office of the secretary, and through which every one must pass upon entering the building. From this reception-room opened the reading-room, the parlors, the amusement-room, the gymnasium, the library, the educational class-rooms, and the secretary's private office. This enabled the

secretary in charge to control the various activities which were housed under one roof, and to keep in touch with the multitude of young men who took advantage of the privileges of the Association.

The years from 1870 to 1878 in America may be characterized as a period of adaptation of the work of the Association to the needs of young men, and the extension of this work to various classes of young men. It is an interesting fact that, as soon as the organization specialized its work and limited it to young men, it immediately found a large field for service. In 1872, at Cleveland, a branch Association was founded for work among railroad men. This met with a hearty response from the men themselves. A secretary was employed, rooms were opened at the railway station of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern road, and an effort made to extend the work elsewhere. Similar societies were also organized at a number of the terminal points, and in the fall of 1875 the attention of Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt, of New York, was called to this work. Through his endorsement, other railroad officials became interested in this movement. It was soon found that it was a profitable investment for railroad corporations to provide the facilities and attractions of a Young Men's Christian Association for the comfort of their employees, and that the improvement in the service yielded a real financial return.

As early as 1858, at the State Universities of Michigan and Virginia, student Young Men's Christian Associations had been organized. Early in the seventies, Mr. Robert Weidensall organized similar societies in a number of colleges. By 1876, there were twenty-five college Associations, with about 2,500 members. Through the influence of Mr. Luther D. Wishard, a student at Princeton, representatives of all college Associations were invited to the international convention held at Louisville, Ky., in 1877. This resulted in the inauguration of the inter-collegiate movement.

An extended effort was also made during this period among German-speaking young men, and toward its close a work was inaugurated among colored young men.

In other lands, while war, ecclesiastical conditions and general conservatism retarded the growth of the Associations, a marked development had taken place. Every three years, con-

ventions of the Associations of all lands were held in different European cities. To these, the American Associations since 1872 have regularly sent representatives. During the early seventies, Mr. Moody made his evangelistic campaigns in the British Isles, and did a great deal to stimulate the work of the Young Men's Christian Association in securing money for buildings, in arousing spiritual zeal, and in calling the attention of the church to this important work. In 1878, some forty representatives of the American Associations attended the world's convention, which met at Geneva, Switzerland. Up to that time, there had been no established headquarters for the world's work. General affairs had been administered from London through Mr. W. E. Shipton, the secretary of the London Association. It was chiefly through the influence of the French and American delegates that the Geneva convention voted to organize the work of the Associations in all lands under an advisory committee, which should have a quorum located at Geneva, Switzerland. Colonel Charles Fermaud, an officer in the Swiss army, and a man with bright business prospects in Geneva, consented to give up his calling and accept the position of general secretary of this committee. By the year 1878, with the establishment of the world's committee, the Young Men's Christian Associations of the world may be said to have developed their ideal of work for young men.

Expansion has been the striking characteristic of the period from 1878 to 1901. The American Associations have increased in membership two and one-half times, from 99,000 to 255,000; in value of property, ten-fold, from \$2,295,000 to more than \$22,000,000; in the number of buildings, seven-fold, from 56 to 400; in employed men, over thirteen-fold, from 114 to 1,525; the current expenses for operating the Associations have increased nine-fold, from \$376,000 to \$2,900,000 annually.

The two factors which have most profoundly influenced the Association movement, during this period, have been the securing of property, and of trained secretaries and directors who give their whole time to this service. The carrying on of an all-round work for young men—physical, social, intellectual and spiritual—demanded not only experienced and able men to conduct the work, but commodious and properly adapted structures in which it could be housed.

The discoverer and demonstrator of the secretaryship was

Robert R. McBurney, who was secretary of the New York City Association from 1862 until his death in 1898. Under his leadership, this office was developed and the number of employed men increased. Of all the agencies the Association movement has brought forth, the most vital is the secretariate. To this may be attributed its permanence and continued power.

Not only have men been employed for supervisory work, but since 1870 there has been an increasing demand for Christian young men to devote their lives to service in the Association as physical directors. More than 300 of these men are now employed. To the Christian physical director, the Young Men's Christian Association owes the development of the physical department, which aims not only to give young men physical training, but rugged, vigorous bodily development. This department has proved a great attraction to young men. It has proved not only a means for physical well-being, which is much needed under modern city conditions, but also a means of leading young men into lives of purity. The demand increased so rapidly that, in 1885, at Springfield, Mass., two schools for the training of general secretaries and physical directors were established. In 1890 a similar school was established at Chicago.

Four-fifths of the employed officers in the Association movement are upon this continent.

The building movement in America has developed with increasing momentum. In 1890, there were 205 buildings, valued at \$8,350,000, in the United States and Canada; in 1900, there were 359. During the past year forty Association buildings have been erected. There is no greater testimony to the confidence of Christian philanthropists and business men in the Young Men's Christian Association and its work than the investment of large sums of money in Association property.

One of the striking developments of this period in the city work has been the growth of the educational classes. Immediately upon the erection of the building on the corner of Twenty-third street and Fourth avenue in New York city, evening classes were started in different subjects for young men. Similar classes were carried on in other cities, and by 1892, 20,526 different men were under instruction.

The latest period of Association history has also been marked by a great extension in the work for different classes of young

men. In August, 1895, the world's student Christian federation of under-graduates of all lands was established. This now enrolls 65,000 members, in 1,400 institutions, in thirty different countries, and is the largest organization among undergraduates in the world. In the United States and Canada the movement has been extended to professional schools, theological seminaries, State universities, and other institutions of learning. There are now 650 college Associations upon this continent. In 1900, these enrolled 24,624 students. Thirty American student Associations own buildings valued at \$1,000,000. There are now seventy-five student secretaries devoting their whole time to this work, and 14,000 undergraduates in America are in voluntary Bible classes.

The work for railroad men has become one of the most remarkable features of Christian endeavor. It is, probably, the most successful Christian work among workingmen carried on at the present time. During 1900, railroad corporations which control nearly three-fourths of the railroad mileage on this continent contributed \$195,000 toward the current expenses of the 159 railroad Associations now in existence. There are seventy-six buildings, valued at \$1,122,000, occupied by these Associations. During the past year, ten new Associations were organized, six of which were provided with buildings. Forty thousand railroad men are members of these Associations. One hundred and ninety secretaries are engaged in this department of the Young Men's Christian Association.

Since 1879, the International Committee has employed a secretary to develop the work among colored young men. There are to-day forty Indian Associations, with 1,600 members, under the direction of a travelling secretary, who is a native American Indian.

Largely as an outgrowth of the work for students in other lands, the American International Committee was invited by missionaries in India to inaugurate a work among young men in non-Christian lands. This has proved a most fruitful form of missionary endeavor. The work has always been carried on in subordination to the church, and as a supplementary work where missions have already been developed. There are now twenty secretaries of the American International Committee in India, Ceylon, Japan, China and Brazil.

With the outbreak of the war with Spain, secretaries were

promptly sent out with tents and suitable equipments with the fast departing regiments, and a successful effort was undertaken to preach the gospel to the soldiers and sailors. The army in the Philippines was provided for in a similar way, and some of the Canadian regiments which have recently gone to South Africa were equipped in like manner. This work has been established as a permanent department of the International Committee.

Even before the war began steps had been taken to inaugurate a work among the seamen of the navy, and after the war a building was equipped for seamen at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This department has developed rapidly, and at the present time there is an organized movement among the seamen of the navy, which is full of promise. Through the munificence of Miss Helen Gould, who has contributed largely toward the railroad and army work, a splendid building is being erected by the Naval Association, near the Navy Yard in Brooklyn, at a cost of \$450,000.

For many years, the work of the Associations was limited to young men between sixteen and eighteen years of age, and upward. It is an interesting sociological development that, in the prosecuting of its work for young men, the Association has been led to give its attention to work among boys. Careful study has led to the conviction that effort ought to begin at the age when the boy is becoming a man—at the dawn of adolescence. There are almost as many boys in cities between the ages of twelve and seventeen as there are young men. Already, separate buildings are being erected for this important work, and twenty secretaries are employed to give their time to this feature of the Association.

Whether the Young Men's Christian Association has reached its final form, no one would be bold enough to affirm. It is remarkable that it should have grouped together such a variety of agencies upon the simple platform of young men advancing the Kingdom of Christ among young men. Through the three periods of its development, the Association has evolved into an institution with an enlarged ideal, closely akin to that of the Christian university. It is still animated by the evangelistic, spiritual purpose of the original band of young men who rallied around George Williams more than fifty-seven years ago. But, while keeping uppermost this ideal, it has endeavored to do, in a

popular way, for the multitudes of young men of our cities, what the Christian university, in a more scholarly way, is doing for the young men who are to enter the professions.

This changed ideal will dominate the future. It has the same high aim as in the past, but it is larger and more far-reaching. If during the past twenty years the Association has increased ten-fold, it may not be too much to anticipate that it will become very much greater in the opening years of the new century. It is estimated that \$250,000,000 are invested in institutions of learning, chiefly for training the men who are to enter the professions and the higher walks of business. If during the past twenty-five years \$26,000,000 have been invested in the Association enterprise, it is likely that a still greater sum will be devoted to this cause during the coming fifty years. Without doubt the Associations of the future will not only be provided with buildings, but with at least partial endowment.

In its field of labor it will reach out to help boys between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, and it may develop a mission to young men in the country and small towns. It is sure to have a large mission to the college students of the world, and to the city young men in non-Christian lands.

During the past twenty-five years, there has been a tendency to concentrate the work in the Association buildings. There is now evident a tendency to extend the work to different parts of the community beyond the building itself. The number of employed men giving their lives to this service is likely to increase largely. In the coming half-century, the Association will have more surely than ever before the confidence of the church and the community at large, and it will become the recognized agency in Protestant lands for the extension of Christ's Kingdom among young men.

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